

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SSB 5202

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As Amended by House, April 4, 2007

**Title:** An act relating to permissible weaponry for on-duty law enforcement officers.

**Brief Description:** Concerning permissible weaponry for on-duty law enforcement officers.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Judiciary (originally sponsored by Senators Delvin, Eide, Hewitt, Brandland, Pridemore, Holmquist, McCaslin, Haugen, Jacobsen, Honeyford, Rasmussen and Roach).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Judiciary: 2/13/07 [DPS].

Passed Senate: 3/06/07, 47-0.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5202 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Kline, Chair; Tom, Vice Chair; McCaslin, Ranking Minority Member; Carrell and Weinstein.

**Staff:** Lidia Mori (786-7755)

**Background:** It is a gross misdemeanor for any person to manufacture, sell, dispose, or possess a spring blade knife. Generally, a spring blade knife is a knife that has a spring-operated blade that opens instantly when a release on the handle is pressed.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** A law enforcement officer who carries a spring blade knife in the discharge of official duty is exempt from current law that prohibits possession of a spring blade knife.

Law enforcement officers may not be prosecuted for possession of a spring blade knife when the officer is transporting the knife to and from the location where it is stored, when the officer is not on official duty.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Law enforcement officers often wear thick protective gloves and, if they need to cut something quickly, it is necessary to have a spring-loaded knife. This bill conforms the law to what is already the practice. A similar exemption as is contained in this bill exists in 12 other states. A spring blade knife allows an officer to cut something with one hand free, and it's also a last ditch self-defense tool.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Phil Watkins, City of Kennewick; Bill Hanson, Fraternal Order of Police.

**House Amendment(s):** It is clarified that the exception to the prohibition on possessing certain weapons applies only to an officer's possession of a spring blade knife, not to possession of other types of prohibited weapons.